



NEWS RELEASE

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USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT INVITES APPLICATIONS FOR RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE LOANS AND GRANTS

WASHINGTON, Jan. 30, 2008 – USDA Rural Development Under Secretary Thomas C. Dorr today invited applications for six programs to help small towns and rural residents finance infrastructure improvements.

“These loans, grants and loan/grant combinations will help communities provide essential services and maintain the infrastructure necessary for businesses and residents to enjoy a high quality of life in rural areas,” Dorr said.

The six programs under which applications are being accepted are:

- Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant Program
- Public Television Digital Conversion Grant Program
- Community Connect Grant Program
- High Energy Cost Grant Program
- Revolving Fund Grant Program
- Household Water Well Grant Program

The Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan and Grant program was created to improve access to education and medical services through the use of technology.

The Digital Public Television grant program provides funding to help rural public television stations install the digital transmission equipment that must be in place by February 17, 2009. Digital Public TV grants also may be used for engineering and environmental studies associated with the transition to digital television.

The Community Connect Grant Program provides grants to telecommunications providers and municipalities to finance the installation of broadband service in rural communities where broadband is least likely to be available. The High Energy Cost Grant Program provides grants for the acquisition, construction or improvement of energy generation, transmission or distribution facilities in communities where the average residential cost for home energy exceeds

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275 percent of the national average. The Revolving Fund Grant Program provides funds to non-profit entities for loans to finance predevelopment costs for water and wastewater projects, or for short-term capital projects that are not part of the regular operation and maintenance of current water systems. The Household Water Well System Grant Program helps individuals finance the cost of household water wells. Funds can be used to upgrade or replace water well systems and to increase the awareness of substandard drinking water systems in communities.

Program	Application Deadline
Public TV Digital Conversion Grant Program	March 28, 2008
Community Connect Grant Program	March 28, 2008
High Cost Energy Program	March 28, 2008
Revolving Fund Grant Program	March 28, 2008
Distance Learning and Telemedicine Loan & Grant Program	April 14, 2008
Household Water Well Grant Program	May 31, 2008

For further details about eligibility rules and application procedures, see the January 28, 2008, *Federal Register*.

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. Rural Development has invested nearly \$91 billion since 2001 for equity and technical assistance to finance and foster growth in homeownership, business development, and critical community and technology infrastructure. More than 1.7 million jobs have been created or saved through these investments. Further information on rural programs is available at a local USDA Rural Development office or by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov> .